

# Generating New Data on Emerging Topics Using the New QCEW Business Supplement (QBS)

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## Can BLS respond quickly to new opportunities for data products?

- BLS has long had the goal of developing a way to quickly and cost-effectively administer new establishment-based surveys on interesting topics where high quality data would be valuable to BLS data users.
- Typically new surveys and data products at BLS require significant start up time, staffing, and costs.

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## History of Special Surveys at BLS

- In the past, BLS has implemented new surveys on interesting topics for various stakeholders as interest/resources allowed:
  - ▶ [Survey of Employer-Provided Child Care Benefits](#)
  - ▶ [Survey of Employer Anti-Drug Programs](#)
  - ▶ [Employer-Provided Training](#)
  - ▶ [Green Goods and Services](#)
  - ▶ [Green Technologies and Practices](#)
- Each of these surveys, conducted independently, required significant investments in development, testing, and execution.

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## Creating the Platform

- Could BLS develop a platform to reduce the time and cost associated with collecting and producing new data products?
- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) fields a large (1.2 million establishment), but short (2-5 minute) annual survey
- This Annual Refiling Survey (ARS) could serve as a platform where additional questions on other topics could be appended.
- This would allow BLS to leverage solicitation, technical infrastructure and staffing resources from the ARS for new survey topics.

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## Can this Really Work?

- BLS conducted pilot tests in 2018 and 2019 on this new platform.
- Respondents were asking whether they could provide different types of information about their business – e.g., How jobs are advertised.
- A majority answered that they were able to provide the information requested.
- Pilots test confirmed feasibility and that we were able to achieve acceptable response rates.

Developing and Testing the Business Research Survey ([PDF](#))

Sharon Stang and Emily Thomas, November 2018

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## A Real World Example – sooner than expected

- The first “production” survey on this platform asking questions about outsourcing scheduled for February 2020
- In March 2020, it became clear that the coronavirus pandemic was going to have a major impact on the global economy
- BLS pivoted to develop a COVID survey using this newly developed platform

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## Starting the COVID Business Response Survey (BRS)

- BLS sought emergency OMB clearance to conduct an establishment survey asking questions about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on business operations
- Topics would focus on changes that business made *as a result of the coronavirus pandemic*
- The goal was to produce data by state, industry, and size class

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## Survey Question Overview

- Continued paying employees told not to work
- Paying health insurance for employees told not to work
- Increased paid sick leave
- Changes to telework
- Received a government loan or grant
- Government-mandated closure
- Increase or decrease in demand
- Difficulty moving/shipping goods

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## Sample and Result Focus

- National data for these questions is not very informative beyond what is widely known
- Focus was on generating data at the state/industry/size levels
- Particularly with the establishment impacts of COVID, these detailed levels are relevant and necessary to better understand overall effects

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## Data Collection

- Condensed the normal cognitive review period and utilized an in-house review by survey methodologist and 9 cognitive interviews with firms of various industries and size
- BLS used a slightly modified version of the original platform created for the quick survey
- Solicitation: Email blasts and printed letters
- All data collected online

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## BRS Tables

- [Business Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic Full Data Set \(CSV ZIP\)](#)
- [Data Dictionary \(XLSX\)](#)
- [National Summary Table \(XLSX\)](#)

### Business Response Survey to the Coronavirus Pandemic - Results by Question

Tables	Contents	Industry	State	Size Class
1-3	Experienced various coronavirus pandemic impacts on their business operations	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
4-6	Made various employment and payroll changes in response to the coronavirus pandemic	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
7-9	Continued paying employees told not to work during the coronavirus pandemic while they were not working	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
10-12	Paid health insurance premiums for some employees told not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
13-15	Offered telework (work remotely) to employees as a result of the coronavirus pandemic	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
16-18	Increased the amount of paid sick leave provided to employees as a result of the coronavirus pandemic	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
19-21	Received a coronavirus-related loan or grant tied to rehiring or maintaining employees on the payroll	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>

### Business Response Survey to the Coronavirus Pandemic - Cross Question Tabulations

Tables	Contents	Industry	State	Size Class
22-24	Told employees not to work and received a coronavirus-related loan or grant that also paid employees who were told not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
25-27	Told employees not to work and did NOT receive a coronavirus-related loan or grant that also paid employees who were told not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
28-30	Told employees not to work and received a coronavirus-related loan or grant that also paid health insurance premiums for some employees told not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
31-33	Told employees not to work and did NOT receive a coronavirus-related loan or grant that also paid health insurance premiums for some employees told not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
34-36	Received a coronavirus-related loan or grant and experienced a shortage of supplies or inputs	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
37-39	Received a coronavirus-related loan or grant and experienced a decrease in demand	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
40-42	Received a coronavirus-related loan or grant and experienced a government-mandated closure	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
43-45	Did NOT receive a coronavirus-related loan or grant and experienced a shortage of supplies or inputs	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
46-48	Did NOT receive a coronavirus-related loan or grant and experienced a decrease in demand	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
49-51	Did NOT receive a coronavirus-related loan or grant and experienced a government-mandated closure	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
52-54	Experienced a government-mandated closure and either reduced employees' hours or told employees not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
55-57	Did NOT experience a government-mandated closure and reduced employees' hours or told employees not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
58-60	Received a coronavirus-related loan or grant and told employees not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>
61-63	Did NOT receive a coronavirus-related loan or grant and told employees not to work	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>	<a href="#">XLSX</a>

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## Original Concept vs. First Production Case

- As originally envisioned, this platform could be an establishment version of the CPS supplement - open to outside sponsors
- Leveraging existing ARS technology/solicitation could make this significantly less expensive than a CPS supplement
- This platform could be speedier than a typical new survey start up at BLS - but it was not built specifically for speed

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## Trade Offs for Survey Potential

- Trade offs between speed and quality...
- BLS wants to focus on the dimensions that are the most important to data user
- Keeping in mind BLS resources and quality standards, how can we align BLS strengths with the priorities of data users for these types of projects?

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## Looking forward

- The impact of COVID on businesses is something that BLS wanted to produce high quality data in a timely manner
- This platform was used for this purpose, which is different than originally envisioned
- How should we focus for the future?

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## Looking forward

- Additional data releases with more levels of detail (ex. industry/size within state)
- Matching with BLS and other data
- Second COVID survey with questions about how businesses are responding to this late stage of the pandemic – fielded July-Sept 2021 – publication aimed for December 2021
- Opening survey platform to interested outside agencies/groups

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## Questions

- There will need to be tradeoffs between quality and speed for quick response surveys. What is an optimal direction for BLS to focus resources on one-time surveys going forward?
- What are future topics, sources for topics, partnerships BLS should consider for quick response surveys?
- What are other sources (publicly available or MOUs) that BLS should work on matching/link projects for COVID survey data?

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# Contact Information

## Business Response Survey to the Coronavirus Pandemic

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